

B. FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Purpose: To describe how food assistance programs assistance units (sometimes referred to as “households” are formed.

WAC 388-408-0035 Assistance units for food assistance.

- (1) For food assistance, a household is:
 - (a) A person living alone;
 - (b) A group of people living together who purchase or prepare meals together;
 - (c) A group of people living together who are required to be one household because of the relationship to each other as described in subsection (2) of this section; or
 - (d) An elderly person with permanent disabilities who is unable to prepare meals. The combined income of all others living in the residence (excluding the spouse) cannot exceed the one hundred sixty-five percent standard under WAC 388-478-0060. The person's spouse must be included in the food assistance household.
- (2) The following people living together must be one household even if they purchase and prepare meals separately:
 - (a) Spouses which means persons who are legally married or who present themselves as husband and wife to the community, friends and relatives;
 - (b) Parents and their children under twenty-two years of age regardless of the child's marital status; and
 - (c) Children under eighteen years of age and the adult who the child is living with when the adult is not the child's parent. When a minor child lives with an adult who is not the child's parent, the child is considered to be under parental control unless the child receives in their own name:
 - (i) A TANF grant; or

- (ii) Gross income equal to or exceeding the TANF grant standard in WAC 388-478-0020(2).
- (3) A household member who is absent from the household a full issuance month, is not eligible for benefits with that household.
- (4) The following persons living in the residence are not household members and if eligible may be a separate food assistance household:
 - (a) Roomers who are persons that pay for lodging but not meals;
 - (b) Others who purchase and prepare meals separately from the household; or
 - (c) Live-in attendants regardless of purchase and prepare arrangements.
- (5) The following persons living in the residence are not household members and are not eligible for food assistance as a separate household:
 - (a) Ineligible students; and
 - (b) Persons eighteen to fifty years old without dependents who are no longer eligible for benefits as specified in chapter 388-444 WAC.
- (6) A person who is living in the residence and is not a household member as described in subsection (4) and (5), is not included when household size, income eligibility, and benefit level are determined for the food assistance unit.
- (7) A boarder is a person who:
 - (a) Is paying a reasonable amount for lodging and meals as determined by the department; or
 - (b) Is in foster care.
- (8) A client can exclude a boarder at the client's request. If excluded, the boarder cannot be a separate food assistance household. Residents of licensed for-profit boarding homes are not eligible for benefits.

- (9) The following household members are ineligible for food assistance and are considered ineligible members:
- (a) Those disqualified for:
 - (i) Intentional program violation (IPV) as specified in WAC 388-446-0015;
 - (ii) Noncompliance with work requirements as specified in WAC 388-444-0055; or
 - (iii) Failure to provide SSN as specified in WAC 388-476-0005;
 - (b) Those who fail to sign the application attesting to citizenship or alien status or immigrants not eligible because of alien status;
 - (c) Fleeing felons as specified in WAC 388-442-0010(1); or
 - (d) Those convicted of drug felonies as described under WAC 388-442-0010(2).
- (10) A person who is living in the residence and is an ineligible household member is not included when household size and benefit level is determined.

CLARIFYING INFORMATION

1. A Food Assistance household is called an assistance unit. Households are a group of people who live together and are a unit for determining eligibility and food assistance benefits. The household determination is mainly based on the purchase and prepare concept.
2. Purchase and Prepare Concept

Persons living with others are one household when they:

 - a. Purchase food together; or

b. Prepare meals together; or

c. Purchase and prepare meals together.

3. Minor Children Not Living With an Adult

When a minor child does not live with an adult, determine household composition as though the minor child has adult status.

4. Home Monitored Household Members

Household members who are convicted offenders permitted to live at home and are being monitored by the court can receive food assistance benefits.

5. Adult Children Living in Parents Residence

Consider adult children ages 18 through 21 living in their parents residence as separate households only when they have separate living, cooking, and sanitation facilities.

Examples

Adult child age 18 is living in the basement of the parent's residence. The basement has a small kitchen, living room, and bathroom that only the adult child uses. This adult child can be a separate household if the adult child purchases and prepares meals separately from the parent.

Adult child age 21 lives in a camper in the parent's yard. It does not have a bathroom (only a porta-potty) so the adult child uses the bathroom in the parent's residence for showers. This adult child is not a separate household.

6. FAP Assistance Units

FAP follows the federal Food Stamp Program regulations for household determination.

WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

Determining When a Boarder is Paying a Reasonable Amount for Meals

1. Use only the amount a boarder pays for meals in the calculation for determining a reasonable amount.
2. Use the entire amount paid for meals and lodging when the amount for meals cannot be determined.
3. Consider the following to be a reasonable amount paid:
 - a. When a boarder receives two or more meals a day, the amount paid for meals must be at least the maximum allotment for the applicable boarder household.
 - b. When a boarder receives one meal a day, the amount paid must be at least two-thirds of the maximum allotment for the applicable boarder household.

WAC 388-408-0040 Residents of Institutions.

- (1) Most residents of institutions are not eligible for food assistance benefits. Residents of the following institutions may be eligible:
 - (a) Federally subsidized housing for the elderly;
 - (b) Qualified drug and alcohol treatment centers when an employee of the treatment center is the authorized representative;
 - (c) Qualified group homes for persons with disabilities;
 - (d) A shelter for battered women and children when the resident left the home that included the abuser; or
 - (e) Nonprofit shelters for the homeless. Homeless clients may use food stamps to purchase prepared meals from meal providers for the homeless.
- (2) A qualified group home is a nonprofit residential facility that:
 - (a) Houses sixteen or fewer persons with disabilities as defined under WAC 388-400-0040(6); and

- (b) Is certified by the division of developmental disabilities (DDD).
- (3) Elderly or disabled household members and spouses may use food stamps to purchase meals from the following when approved by FNS:
 - (a) Communal dining facility; or
 - (b) Nonprofit meal delivery service.

CLARIFYING INFORMATION

1. Institutions

A person living in an institution that provides meals may be eligible for food assistance benefits when:

- a. A person cannot eat these meals because the person needs a special diet; and
- b. The institution is unable or unwilling to provide the special diet.

2. Group Homes

- a. A household consists of any person or group of persons who apply together.
- b. Minors living in a group home can qualify as separate food stamp households.

3. Meal Providers for the Homeless

- a. To accept food stamps for prepared meals, meal providers for the homeless must be approved by the Division of Assistance Payments and certified by Food and Nutrition Services. If a public or private non-profit organization requests approval for this, tell the person to call (360) 413-3083.

- b. Homeless meal providers cannot act as an authorized representative. See: **PAYEE.**
 - 4. Communal Dining and Home Delivered Meals
- There is no list of facilities that are approved by FNS. Clients will need to ask the food service if they accept food coupons for payment.

ACES PROCEDURES

Members of the residence who are entered during the screening process appear on the (STAT) screen for the food assistance unit. Determine who are members of the food stamp household according to policy before entering the valid values in the relationship and financial responsibility fields on the STAT screen in ACES. Incorrect valid values entered on the STAT screen may effect eligibility and payment accuracy.

- 1. For each member listed, determine how that person relates to the head of household.
- 2. Enter the valid value for each member's relationship in the (Rel) field of the (STAT) screen. Press <F1> for appropriate valid values.
- 3. For all food stamp household members, even if ineligible, enter <PN> in the (Fin Resp) field of the (STAT) screen. For others in the residence who are not required to be household members, enter <NM>. ACES will deny ineligible household members and allocate income and resources as required. <TRANSMIT>
- 4. For special coding on the FS ID card for communal dining and home delivered meals, enter on the (STAT) screen:
 - a. [CD] for communal dining; and
 - b. [M] for delivered meals.

WAC 388-408-0045 Shelters for battered women and children.

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| (1) Persons living in a shelter for battered women and children may receive food assistance. |
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- (2) A shelter resident who left a food assistance household that included the abuser:
 - (a) Is certified as a separate household;
 - (b) May receive an additional allotment even when the resident already received benefits with the abuser; and
 - (c) Are certified on the basis of:
 - (i) Income and resources to which they have access; and
 - (ii) Expenses for which they are responsible.

WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. When certifying an assistance unit under this section , remove the clients who are in the shelter from their previous food assistance unit.
2. Advise the household that:
 - a. Food coupons may be used to purchase meals prepared by the shelter if the shelter is authorized by Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to redeem them; or
 - b. The household may designate an employee of the facility as an authorized representative when the shelter purchases food for the shelter at retail stores.
3. Exclude unavailable resources. See: Availability under **RESOURCES**.

ACES PROCEDURES

When a resident of a shelter for battered women and children is applying as a separate assistance unit from the abuser:

1. Remove the shelter residents from the original assistance unit:
 - a. From the ACES (AMEN) screen, Enter [R] in the (Selection) field and enter the AU number for the client's food stamp assistance unit in the (AU ID) field.

- b. Press <Home> key and enter [DEM 1] and the client pointer for the person you are removing. If you do not know, you can type 01 for the head of household, 02 for the second person, 03 for the 3rd, etc.
- c. From the client's [DEM 1] screen, move cursor to (Living Arrangement) field and enter [NO] for not in home. In the (V) field to the right of the living arrangement, enter valid value for verification used. Press <F1> for appropriate valid values.
- d. If necessary, return to step B. to remove nay other household members.
- e. Press <Home> key and enter [DONE]. Confirm eligibility results and benefits. The benefit amount should reflect removal of all residents now in the shelter.
- f. The current month's (FSFI) screen will calculate an overpayment and require you to enter an overpayment reason. Enter [IG] on the (OP Reas) field to ignore the overpayment. Confirm the benefits.

Note: This process of removing the persons residing in the shelter must be completed for the current month and the ongoing month in ACES.

- 2. Screen the applying shelter residents as a new food stamp household. See: **Applications** for instructions.

WAC 388-408-0050 Homeless status for food assistance.

A client is considered homeless when they do not have a regular nighttime residence or when they stay primarily in a:

- (1) Supervised shelter that provides temporary living or sleeping quarters;
- (2) Halfway house providing temporary residence for persons going into or coming out of an institution;
- (3) Residence of another person that is temporary and the client has lived there for ninety days or less; or
- (4) A place not usually used as sleeping quarters for humans.

CLARIFYING INFORMATION

If the household is determined to be homeless at application or recertification, consider the household homeless for the entire certification period.

WORKER RESPONSIBILITIESDetermining the 90 Day Period

1. Begin a new 90-day count when the client:
 - a. Moves from the residence of one person to the residence of another person and the client is living there temporarily; or
 - b. Moves out of the current residence for a period of time and then returns to that residence. There must be a break of at least one day.
2. Count the 90-day period consecutively beginning from the date the client moved into the temporary residence of another person.